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147585

Department of State Pol 23-9 LIBYA

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STATE

SUBJECT: ARMY COUP IN LIBYA

1. At about 5:00 a.m. (Libyan time) 1 September army units seized key installations in Tripoli, Benghazi, and Baida, meeting only minimal resistance from police. Ports and airports were closed, roadblocks set up, and a curfew imposed. After initial confusion, ~~only~~ loading at oil terminals ~~were~~ was permitted to continue. Only sporadic firing has taken place since the initial hours of the coup.

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AF/N:ALowrie	9/1/69	22622	AF/N - Mr. Root

CLEARANCES:

NEA - Mr. Marthinsen

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2. Shortly after coup, ~~xxdixx~~ Tripoli and Benghazi proclaimed "Arab Republic of Libya" stating Army acted to rid country of reactionaries and corrupt elements. Radio further stated coup was purely internal matter and that Ar has assumed responsibility for ~~xxxxx~~ protection of all foreigners. Declaration of newly formed Revolutionary Council (RC) sta[illegible] (a) RC is source of all authority; (b) RC will build a socialist Libya to lift country into modern era; (c) expressed solidarity with Third World; and (d) stressed importante of religion and Koran in new government.

3. Our charge along with representatives of British, French and Soviet Embassies, was convoked by young Army Captain who told them coup was carried out for internal reasons; new government wished to honor all treaties and agreements (including oil agreements); and that Embassies need have no fear for safety of their nationals. (American community in Libya number about 10,000 including 5000 military personnel and dependents at Wheelus Air Base.)

4. Coup leaders have not yet identified themselves. Only name

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that has emerged is new Army chief-of-staff Sa'adiin Abu Shuwayrib. Shuwayrib is 35-year old officer who entered Army in 1953 and received training both in US and UAR. He was apparently retired in 1967 for unknown reasons.

5. 80-year old King Idris is in Bursa, Turkey on vacation. We have no information on King's intentions, but his private secretary has apparently announced that coup is of no importance and that Idris plans to return to Libya. Crown Prince Hassan ar-Ridha has been heard over Radio Tripoli stating that he renounces all his powers as deputy to King and expressed support of new army regime.

6. Posts may at their discretion draw on foregoing ~~and~~ in discussions with host governments and colleagues.

7. Department responded to initial press inquiries as follows: QUOTE We still have only fragmentary information on the coup, but we are in touch with our offices in Tripoli, Benghazi, and Baida and are following the situation closely. All Americans are safe. As of this morning the coup leaders had not yet identified themselves. An army spokesman for the coup group assured our representative in Tripoli, along with those of other governments, that there was no ~~reason~~

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reason for concern about the safety of members of the foreign community. He further stated that the army will respect all agreements and treaties and observe the rights of the petroleum companies. Radio Libya announced that the coup was an internal matter and not directed against any foreign country. END QUOTE

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